

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers I-94 Rehabilitation Project

TRANSIT

1. How has transit been included in this project?

The Recommended Alternative provides an opportunity to improve existing transit in the I-94 project area. Improvements could include significant modifications to existing bus routes and increased transit service. The proposed Recommended Alternative would allow transit operators to provide better services for residents and surrounding businesses. The Recommended Alternative would include two-lane continuous service drives with an eight-foot shoulder along I-94. The service drives could be used to provide and integrate transit services within the study area and the City of Detroit.

2. How will the Recommended Alternative impact bus routes?

The service drive concept will present a better opportunity for significant transit service improvements. MDOT is committed to maintaining and enhancing the current system, and will work closely with the City and the affected communities to address specific issues raised as part of this study. Also, express buses that may use I-94 will experience significant savings in travel times.

RESIDENTIAL/BUSINESSES

3. How will the proposed I-94 Rehabilitation Project impact traffic using local streets and would it encourage trucks to use the service drives?

The proposed improvement will enable traffic to flow better by providing continuous service drives adjacent to the freeway. Service drives usually provide improved access and would help to move traffic away from residential streets. In general, trucks will not be attracted to the service drives because there are traffic signals along the service drives and the speeds will be slower than on the freeway.

4. If existing homes are purchased for this project, will homeowners be offered the appraised value of the homes?

Yes, the price offered would be a fair market value based on independent appraisal. In addition there is relocation assistance. MDOT has a defined process for acquiring properties for highway projects. A real estate brochure is available for more information.

5. Who will pay for the acquisition costs for the commercial and residential properties?

The acquisition costs will be paid by the State using Federal and State highway funds.

6. How would the pedestrian and vehicular crossings be affected by the Recommended Alternative, especially around the schools?

The reconstruction of I-94 provides an excellent opportunity for MDOT and the City of Detroit to improve pedestrian and vehicular crossings along the freeways. MDOT and the City are committed to sitting down with affected communities to define mutually agreed upon improvements for pedestrian access and safety through the design phase of the project.

TRAFFIC

7. What is a service drive?

A service drive is a parallel local street adjacent to the freeway. It connects streets interrupted by the freeway, allowing traffic to circulate to streets crossing or intersecting with the freeway. Service drives are usually controlled with traffic signals.

8. What will be the speed limit on the service drives?

The speed limit on the service drives will be determined by the City of Detroit. It will be consistent with the speed limits on other local streets within the City of Detroit.

9. How will traffic be routed during construction?

MDOT will develop a detailed detour plan to route traffic in several stages during construction. The plan will also provide for continued traffic movement along the freeway corridor during construction. Every effort will be made to minimize construction impacts.

BENEFITS

10. How will the proposed I-94 Rehabilitation Project benefit the motoring public?

This project will reduce travel time; improve your ability to access places you want to go; increase safety; provide a smoother riding surface; and provide flexibility for future transportation uses that could include transit.

IMPACTS

11. Are you going to use retaining walls and why?

Yes. Retaining walls along the depressed portions of the freeway will be used to minimize the amount of additional land needed for construction and reduce any traffic noise to the surrounding homes and businesses.

12. What will retaining walls on the freeway look like?

There are various types of retaining walls. Decisions regarding the retaining walls will be made by working with communities during the design phase of the project. MDOT is committed to providing aesthetically pleasing retaining walls.

CONSTRUCTION

13. When will construction start and how long will it last?

After the planning stage, which is the current study phase, a detailed engineering design will follow, that will take approximately two to three years. Real estate acquisition will begin after the detailed engineering design is completed. Construction will begin after the necessary real estate for the project is acquired. The duration of construction will depend on funding availability and construction phasing.

14. What will be the cost of the construction/improvements?

The total cost is estimated to be 960 million dollars (this figure is based on 2002 dollars).

15. Who will pay for the project?

The improvements for I-94 will be paid by a combination of sources: Federal, State, and Local. In general, the bulk of the money will come from Federal and State, with some local participation from the City of Detroit.

16. What section of the project will be built first?

This has not yet been determined. The decision would be based on the availability of funds and improvement needs along the project corridor.

17. How is the availability of funds determined?

First, a financial plan will need to be prepared and approved by the FHWA. A financial plan is a document required by FHWA for projects of this size. It discusses the sources of funding for the project and possible revenue stream that will be available for the construction of the project. Additionally, after the funding has been identified and approved, it must be programmed before construction can begin. The

financial plan and subsequent programming of monies are outstanding issues that need to be addressed before a construction schedule can be established.

18. Will the freeway be completely closed during the reconstruction?

A complete freeway closure would be highly unlikely. The reconstruction will be built in phases and MDOT will maintain access to residential homes and neighborhoods, as well as to businesses to the extent possible.

PUBLIC INPUT

19. How will concerns by the citizens be incorporated into the proposed project?

The March 2001 Public Hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) provided the public another opportunity to share their comments regarding this project, in addition to other opportunities that have included the US mail, fax, email, project website, and the 313-963-4655 hotline. Also, public meetings, citizen action committees, small group meetings, etc. are opportunities for people to voice concerns and raise issues pertaining to the study. Issues will be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) raised from these meetings and other comments received.

20. Will this be my last chance to provide input on the project?

No, although the official comment period from the DEIS and Public Hearing ended May 11, 2001, comments are still coming in. The comments received through US mail, email and fax during the formal comment period are considered a part of the official record and part of the official transcript from the Public Hearing. The official record guided the study team in consideration of issues and in the determination of a Recommended Alternative and will also guide the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is currently available online. Additionally, comments may be received through the 313-963-4655 hotline and the I-94 Rehabilitation Project website.

21. How are the public comments being used?

The comments received during the comment period were reviewed and summarized. Based on the initial review of the comments, it was determined that three modifications to the Build Alternative presented in the DEIS should be analyzed to see if further reductions in residential, business, and right-of-way acquisitions could be made. The three modifications to the Build Alternative presented in the DEIS included:

- DEIS Build Alternative Modification 1: Remove the reserved space in the I-94 median and modify the service drive lanes to two 11-foot travel lanes.
- DEIS Build Alternative Modification 2: Modify the service drive lanes to two 11-foot travel lanes and keep the reserved space in the I-94 median.

- DEIS Build Alternative Modification 3: Remove the reserved space in the I-94 median and keep the three lane service drives in each direction.

22. When will the Recommended Alternative be presented to the public?

The Recommended Alternative was selected in October 2002, after addressing all issues and comments received from the Public Hearing. On August 1, 2003, the Detroit City Council provided concurrence on the Recommended Alternative. This Recommended Alternative will be analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that will also address any additional issues raised by the public. The Recommended Alternative will be presented at Public Informational Meetings to be held October 21 and 22, 2003.

23. How will we be kept informed of changes after the Public Hearing?

You may call 313-963-4655 or visit the website www.mdot.state.mi.us/i94rehab/ for updated information.

24. How is the final decision made on this project?

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the City of Detroit, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have been working together, and will continue to work together to reach a final decision with the input received from the public and resource agencies.

25. Where can I call if I need additional information?

For additional information, please call 313-963-4655 or visit the website www.mdot.state.mi.us/i94rehab/.